A Rough Stitch (Prologue)

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A Rough Stitch (Prologue)

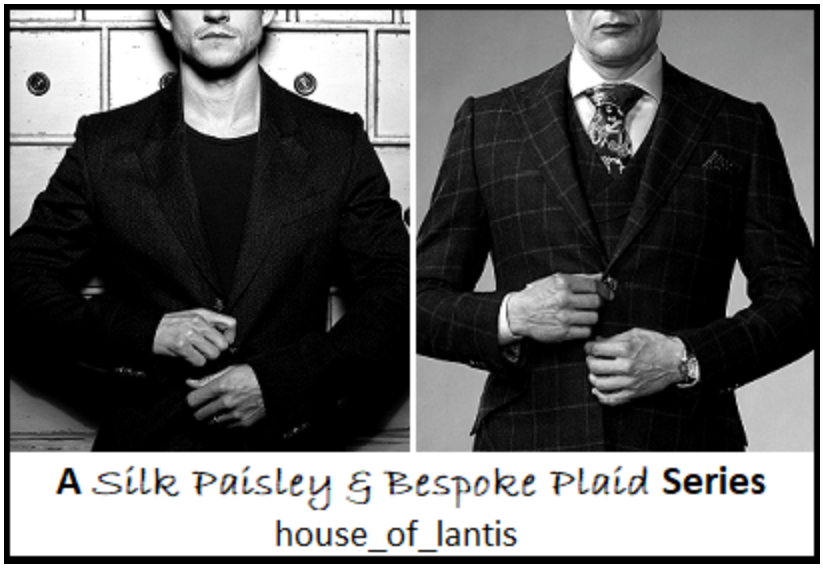
by house_of_lantis

Summary

How Will and Hannibal first meet in the Suit!Porn verse.

Notes

Author's Note: As I was working on the next story in the series, I realized that I needed to write some additional backstory before I could explore more of their relationship in the next story.



Hannibal Lecter's Office

Baltimore, Maryland

Thursday, February 8, 2018

Will parked his car in the underground parking garage and walked along the sidewalk to the building next door. It looked like a residence built with pale cream stone and a dark blue roof, tucked between a cathedral and a commercial high rise building. It was an odd location for a psychiatric practice. Will's very limited experience with psychiatrists were often in clinical office settings.

He walked up the front steps and entered through the front door. Inside, there was a door to the right and a door to the left, each with discreet plaques announcing the names of the different offices in the building. Will looked at the signage beside the door that listed the three occupants of the building, with Dr. Hannibal Lecter on the second floor. Will took the staircase slowly until he came upon the second floor.

He opened the door that was labeled for Dr. Lecter and stepped into a small room that was obviously a waiting room. It was set up with a couple of chairs and a small table. There was another door made of a heavy wooden door, stained a very dark brown.

Will checked his watch and saw that he was a few minutes early. Dr. Lecter didn't seem to have a receptionist. He wondered what was the protocol to announce his arrival, if he should knock on the inner door or just wait for his appointed time. He decided to sit and wait; and if this Dr. Lecter didn't open the door, Will could leave and he could tell Jack that Dr. Lecter wasn't available for the appointment.

He let out a weary sigh and closed his eyes for a long moment. He really didn't want to be there and he really didn't want some shrink trying to get into his head. The only reason he was doing this was to reassure Jack that he wasn't going to have a meltdown while chasing after killers down a dark rabbit hole.

The door opened and a tall, well dressed man stood in the doorway. "Mr. Graham."

Will shook his hand, glancing quickly to meet his brown eyes for just a moment, and looked at a point on his shirt collar, his gaze drawn to the paisley pattern of the silk tie. Will frowned slightly, visually confounded by the amount of plaid and paisley in Dr. Hannibal Lecter's clothes.

"Dr. Lecter."

"It's a pleasure to finally meet you. Please, come in." Dr. Lecter said, his voice resonant and his unusual accent sibilant.

Will stepped into the wide, open room. He noted that there was a mezzanine along one wall, two tall ladders on rails that could be easily moved from one end to the other. The mezzanine was lined with bookshelves and Will could see a combination of leather bound books, hardback books, and a number of interesting knick knacks on the shelves. He wondered if Dr. Lecter would find it rude if Will climbed up the ladder to the mezzanine to explore. He glanced at the doctor and realized that he would find it extremely rude and a violation of his privacy.

Otherwise, the room seemed well designed with a touch of modern and Old World flare. There was even a small fireplace that looked functional, cleaned and well kept. Will could tell that Dr. Lecter was a man who liked details and luxury.

The doctor closed the door and walked towards Will, his expression open and friendly, but not overly so. Will carefully watched Dr. Lecter's eyes to see if he would see a spark of glee at having him there; he had seen that certain type of look in the eyes of other psychiatrists, looking for any opportunity to assess him. If anything, Dr. Lecter wasn't all that emotive, and Will didn't get any weird vibes from him. He was a couple of inches taller than Will, broader at the shoulders, his hair neatly combed, and dressed rather formally. He thought that psychiatrists dressed to appear approachable and professional, but Dr. Lecter was certainly dressed to intimidate. Will would never mistake him to be a soft bellied, well-heeled office worker. There was a predator in Dr. Lecter, but tightly coiled and under control. It made Will put up his guard, but it also made him feel a little more relaxed. Will knew how to deal with slumbering beasts.

"Would you like to take a seat?"

Will looked at the seating options. There were the two modern looking leather chairs facing each other; the stereotypical chaise of some sort; a light blue couch lined one wall; and a round table with four chairs was tucked in a corner. He wondered if this was some kind of test by the doctor to gauge where he'd sit.

He took one of the leather chairs and watched as Dr. Lecter took the seat across from him.

"I admit that I am surprised that you're here," he said, looking at Will. "When Jack Crawford asked me to meet with you, he warned me that there was a good chance that you wouldn't attend this meeting."

Will huffed, annoyed that Jack was talking about him to Dr. Lecter, and looked away. "I guess my reputation precedes me."

"I was quite impressed by your monograph on--"

"Time of death by insect activity," Will finished for him, unimpressed. Every psychiatrist interested in getting into his head always seemed to mention his journal article, as if that would give them an in to picking apart Will's mind. A part of him was disappointed that Dr.

Lecter was going to be cut from the same uninteresting cloth. “Yeah, thanks, glad you enjoyed it.”

Dr. Lecter paused, his lips pressing together in a reproachful sneer so quick that Will would’ve missed the microexpression if he hadn’t been staring at the knot of his paisley necktie.

Oh, Will thought, wisely keeping his smirk to himself, Dr. Lecter was *offended* .

“If you will allow me, I was going to say that I read your monograph on male penetrative control and its over usage as a profile template,” Dr. Lecter said, coolly. “It was widely reported that the Chesapeake Ripper had returned, but it was your controversial profile of the actual killer’s sexual sadism that brought him to justice.”

“Everyone believed that the Marlows were victims of the Ripper, but the Chesapeake Ripper doesn’t use guns and he’s not a sexual sadist. It’s not his MO. He prefers to inflict *intimate* pain and degradation, but it’s not sexual.”

“Do you believe that a killer change his pathology, evolve over time? Perhaps the Chesapeake Ripper became bored of his usual, as you say, MO.”

“The Ripper doesn’t get bored.”

“Your profile of the Chesapeake Ripper is considered *de rigueur* reading in academic and professional circles.”

Will looked up to meet Dr. Lecter’s eyes, pushing the frame of his eyeglasses up so he could get a good look at him. He wasn’t conventionally handsome, but he was a striking looking man. His most striking feature were his lips, full and pursed, the line of his lips distinct. There were a number of fine lines on his face that showed he wasn’t vain enough to artificially smooth them out. And while his clothes were probably tailored for him and ostentatious, Will considered that it was an expression of his personality and his social class. There was no doubt that Dr. Lecter was probably from money -- and old money at that; Will had seen people with old money while he was working with his dad in boatyards as a kid.

“And I also enjoyed your standard monograph on time of death by insect activity,” Dr. Lecter said, dryly.

For some reason, that made Will laugh, and it cut the weird tension between them.

“You have an interest in serial killers, Dr. Lecter?”

“Purely on an intellectual level, I assure you,” he said, lips quirking with a grin. “Afterall, it is in my professional interest to endeavor to understand the darker motivations and behaviors of the human psyche.”

Something unclenched in Will and he gave a relieved sigh, blinking up at Dr. Lecter. “Thank you. And I apologize for my rudeness.”

Dr. Lecter nodded in easy acceptance. “You appear to be distressed by the fact that I spoke about your academic publications. Your work is well regarded.”

“It’s not the first time that a shrink brought up that publication as a lure to hook me into giving them academic street cred,” Will said, lifting his chin slightly as he looked at Dr. Lecter. “I find it pretty tasteless.”

“Dr. Alana Bloom speaks highly of you.”

“Yeah, well, she doesn’t run mind games on me,” he said, shrugging. “Doesn’t think my thoughts are tasty enough to take a bite. I know she’s been asked to study me, but she’s always said no.”

“You believe she’s protecting you.”

Will took a deep breath and looked around the room. “She believes she’s my friend.”

“What do you believe?”

He laughed, looking at Dr. Lecter. “So I guess we’re going to start talking about my feelings now, Dr. Lecter?”

“Or anything else that you wish. It is your hour.”

“Even if we just sit here in silence?”

“Mr. Graham,” he said, softly, taking a deep breath. “Will. May I call you, Will?”

He wanted to say no, just to be an ass, but Dr. Lecter had only offered polite courtesy and there was no reason to deny him. Will nodded his assent.

“Sure, but keep it professional.”

“Or you can call me Hannibal and we can socialize like adults.”

“Just shooting the shit like a couple of grown ups? *Hannibal* .”

Will was amused by the series of microexpressions that crossed Hannibal’s face and he ducked his head, running his hand over his hair.

“Sorry,” he said, grinning slightly as he looked up at Hannibal. “It’s been a long time since I socialized like an adult.”

“Will, I’m not your doctor and I’m not your therapist. We can sit in silence for this session. If that is your desire, I would like to return to my desk to finish my paperwork before I leave this evening. You are welcomed to stay for the allotted time and we will both have a clear conscience when we report back to Jack Crawford.”

He met Hannibal’s steady gaze, his face free of any microexpressions. Will thought that if he really did just want to wait out the rest of their hour, Hannibal would use the time to do paperwork, and he wouldn’t hold it over Will or resent him for it. It was refreshing for Will to meet someone who wasn’t going to try and take something from him.

“Do you have plans for the rest of your evening?”

Will shook his head. “No.”

“Then I’d like to invite you to have dinner with me at my home,” Hannibal said, a small smile on his lips. “Perhaps if we left the confines of my office for somewhere that encourages conversation between friends and colleagues, our time together won’t seem so painful.”

“Are you asking me out on a date? Kind of unorthodox, don’t you think?”

Hannibal got to his feet and gave Will an amused look. “As I said, you are not my patient, but I would be pleased to be your friend.”

Will chuckled and got to his feet as well. “No one actually wants to be my friend, Hannibal.”

“We can discuss it over dinner,” he said, walking to his desk and picking up his leather portfolio, adding a notebook and a file folder inside, zipping it up. “Do you have any food allergies, Will?”

“No.”

Hannibal pulled one of his business cards from inside his desk drawer and picked up a pen to jot down something on the back. He handed the card to Will. It was Hannibal's address and cellphone number. Hannibal walked to his coat rack and took down a long, black wool coat, slipping it on. He buttoned the front as he walked back to his desk, picking up his portfolio.

Will was highly amused and he tucked the card into one of his front pockets on his canvas jacket, watching as Hannibal gestured politely for Will to head to the door that led into the waiting room. He watched as Hannibal turned off the lights to his office and closed the door, locking it with his key. They stepped out into the hallway and Hannibal locked the outer door as well.

This was not how Will thought things would go. He was amused at himself for going along with this harebrained idea; but there was something *different* about Dr. Hannibal Lecter, something hidden at in the peripheral, just out of Will's sight. There were only a few people that Will found interesting enough to step beyond his own personal boundaries and defenses, uncaring about his own social awkwardness.

He followed Hannibal outside through the front door. "Aren't you going to lock it?"

"There's an automatic security alarm and locking mechanism after seven o'clock," he said, as they walked down the front steps. "I presume you parked in the public garage next door?"

"Yeah."

"My car is located behind the office in a private lot. I'll meet you at my home, it should take you about thirty minutes. The driveway is behind the house, but there is also adequate street parking. Please call me if you have any trouble finding it," Hannibal said, giving him a small grin.

"All right, I'll meet you there," Will said, nodding.

He turned and walked towards the building with the underground parking garage, making his way down to the lower levels where he parked his Volvo station wagon. He sat inside his car for a few moments, then pulled out the business card from his pocket to put in the address

into his map app on his phone. It looked straightforward enough, he thought, tossing his phone on the passenger seat and starting the engine.

His hands gripped the steering wheel for a long moment, feeling something shake loose in his gut. Will wasn't a superstitious guy and he didn't have premonitions, no matter what some of the FBI agents said about him behind his back, but he did pay attention to his gut instincts. His empathy and his imagination fed him information, allowing him to see and empathize with anyone in any situation.

Will tugged on his seatbelt and moved his car out of the parking space. There was a good chance that getting to know Dr. Hannibal Lecter was going to blow up in his face; but it wasn't enough to stop him. *Not yet.* Not until he knew what Hannibal was hiding.

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